

Somerset County Department of Human Services

Making Vibrant Connections with our Residents

The mission of the Somerset County Department of Human Services is to improve the life of all county residents by promoting the economic, social, emotional, physical and mental well-being and safety of residents and communities.

Michael J. Frost, LCSW, ACSW- Director of Human Services

Julie DeSimone, LSW- Assistant to the Director

***Thoughts From the Director* Why Our Work Still Matters: Now More Than Ever**

As I reflect a bit on the marking this March of National Professional Social Work Month, I will unabashedly admit that at this stage of my career I have a full supply of "circles around the sun" and "more forehead than hair" looks. I am (much to my own shock) now one of the "old timers." In my mind I am still the slim and hirsute young man who decided, over 35 years ago, to become a social worker and set out to make the world (or a small corner of it) a better place in which to live. I am sometimes asked by young folks considering such a career path the million dollar question: "if you had it to do all over again, would you make the same choice?" The answer - without hesitation is - indeed I would.

Youth is often accompanied by hope and belief and faith in the future. The world seems (for most of us who have been lucky enough to grow up in a loving and nurturing environment) a place full of possibility and promise. For many of us, this is the period where we first entertain the notion that what each of us *does* in our lives - both personal and professionally - matters. Some of us arrive at this via the values and behaviors expressed in our family of origin, or our "larger family" of friends and community (schools, places of worship or fellowship). Conversely, some of us come to this notion based on the things we've lived or observed that we *wouldn't* wish on others - and feel therefore motivated to change. However one arrives at the decision to try to "change the world" the "how" of the matter becomes crucial and potentially life changing.

How does one professionalize being a "change agent?" For many of us, that professionalization has led us to choosing a career as a social worker. In practical terms, that has meant a choice to tailor our college education around a social work major or follow a liberal

arts degree with post graduate work that makes us eligible for licensure (at a variety of levels, based on a combination of work experience and examination passage).

I've already taken the position that this is a career choice worth making and here's how I think about it - thoughts that I think apply both to professional social work and to our non-social worker friends working alongside us. I have found over the years that there are certainly periods of time during which one feels like Sisyphus, perpetually attempting to roll a stone to the top of the mountain only to have it roll back to the bottom, often at a significant emotional, psychological and even physical cost. These periods are made tolerable, however, by those during which the stone makes it to the top, or at least finds a resting place much nearer the goal than the place it started. While it is true that the mountain remains, and the "stones" rarely (if ever) crest the mountain and roll away into "problem fully solved land," progress does, in fact occur. What we do matters. I would argue that now, more than ever, as we watch the rise of cynical and vitriolic appeals to our lowest common denominator, that our daily efforts in the trenches to tackle the very real problems of our world with civility, respect, dignity, and plain hard work are critically important.

Am I just an aging boomer social worker seeking to rationalize my life's work as meaningful? Perhaps --- but my gut tells me that our struggle to make this house/town/county/country/world a better place is worth doing - especially with those folks who need our help the most. There is an old '60's expression: "until 2 and 2 and 50 make a 1,000,000." Keep the faith, friends. There is still a lot of work to be done.




Questions or comments?

Email Julie at
desimone@co.somerset.nj.us or
call 908-704-6335

2016 Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

Patricia L. Walsh, Director • Peter S. Palmer, Deputy Director

Patrick Scaglione • Mark Caliguire • Brian D. Levine

Positive Family Engagement Leads to Successful Youth

The Office of Juvenile Institutional Services (JIS) and Somerset County Probation's juvenile officers recently partnered to develop a family engagement protocol for youth on probation. Research shows that juveniles with positive family involvement are more likely to succeed, and genuine family involvement is vital to achieving positive long-term outcomes for the vulnerable youth in the justice system. JIS brings to the table years of experience and success using an intensive case management model with court involved youth and families, and has driven the process of developing a family-focused orientation program for youth just coming on to probation, as well as a series of educational and recreational activities that will bring probation officers, youth and families together to celebrate and build on successes. Funding for these activities come from a grant from provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission, as a result of Somerset County's participation in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). Known as "Innovations" funding, these monies provide an additional resource and support to those JDAI sites that have demonstrated an active commitment to the implementation of JDAI's core strategies.



Annual Point in Time Survey

On January 27, 2016, the Community Development Office facilitated the Annual Point in Time Survey. This survey, which takes place on the last Wednesday of January every year, is part of a statewide effort to obtain an accurate snapshot of New Jersey's homeless population in response to a directive from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The data is also used by the county and local non-profit agencies when applying for grants to assist the homeless population and is especially useful to the Continuum of Care Committee, which meets on the second Thursday of every other month.

Collecting baseline data is essential to understanding the causes of homelessness and designing effective responses. Somerset County is required to report the number of people who are homeless at particular intervals in order to apply for HUD Continuum-of-Care funding, which is a discretionary grant that provides housing and supportive services to people with special needs. Data collection at regular intervals also helps track progress toward reducing homelessness. The Community Development Office collects this data by enlisting the support of community housing and service providers that work with the population and the County Board of Social Services.

The Community Development Office also hosts a second event called Project Homeless Connect on the same day at a local organization called Freedom Trail. Freedom Trail is a wellness center for community members that deal with mental health issues and is located in downtown Somerville. In addition to staff that interview the homeless as part of Project Homeless Connect, social service organizations are also present to screen clients for relevant services and distribute donated items. This year Alternatives, Community Hope, County Social Services, Lyons VA, Monarch Housing, Project Outreach and Zufall Health Center were all represented. In total, forty-five clients came to the event, participated in the survey and received donations, and got information about services.

The Community Development Office wishes to thank all of the providers who collect survey data from clients, the community members who donated personal items and clothing, the agency representatives that came to Freedom Trail and of course, Freedom Trail, for hosting Project Homeless Connect. **For more information about Freedom Trail, check out the Agency of the Month section.** Preliminary survey data, which will be analyzed and summarized by Monarch Housing, will be available in March.

Richard Hall Integrates Whole Healthcare

The Renaissance Integration Initiative model transforms the way behavioral and primary health care is delivered and reduces disparities in access among consumers who are cost burdened, uninsured and Medicaid/ Medicare recipients. Integrating primary care services into behavioral health settings is a key component of wellness and recovery, and will improve the health outcomes for individuals with mental illness, Co-occurring Disorders, Veterans, and those who have experienced complex trauma.

The Mission of the Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center (RHCMHC) is to provide wellness and recovery oriented services and trauma informed care to consumers who generally experience barriers to receiving quality care. In keeping with the mission, RHCMHC and Jewish Renaissance Medical Center (JRMC) have partnered to provide consumers with co-located behavioral and primary health care and mobile dental services.

Through the use of evidenced-based practices (EBP) such as the Health and Recovery Peer (HARP) Program focused on health and wellness activities, the physical health status of adults with serious mental illness will improve. The program will average 325 consumers annually and 1302 through the life of the grant. The population of focus will be with adults with serious mental illness, Co-occurring Disorders, and Veterans at risk for comorbid primary health care conditions, chronic disease and racial/ethnic minorities who experience poor health outcomes. The consumer experience will be enhanced through the use of culturally and linguistically competent care and efforts will be made to improve the access, quality and reliability of care.

An Integrated Treatment Team consisting of, but not limited to, a Nurse Care Coordinator, an Integrated Case Manager, a Co-occurring Clinician and a Peer Wellness Coach, will create the consumer centered health home. The foundation will be built upon the use of EBP's, wellness and recovery interventions, data sharing and treatment planning. To provide a more holistic continuum of services, other specialists will be provided by a Nutritionist, Dentist and Occupational Therapist to improve health outcomes. The overall objective is to reduce the per capita cost of care and emergency room visits and re-hospitalizations.

In partnership with JRMC and our community stakeholders, the RII is committed to providing access to quality integrated whole health care for all consumers.

If you are interested in receiving additional information about this program contact Donna Gapas at 908-253-3156 or e-mail at RII@co.somerset.nj.us

Tax Prep Made Easy through Volunteer Work

The volunteers of the Somerset County Office of Volunteer Services TCE/AARP Tax program are once again busy helping County residents to file their federal and state tax forms. The 65 trained volunteers are working throughout the county at 7 locations where they meet with clients to process the forms and e-file the returns. In addition, the 7 office volunteers are answering the hundreds of calls that come in on a daily basis. In the first week of our tax season, the volunteers handled over 300+ calls from local residents asking for appointments.

Although this program is offered throughout the state, our program is unique in the fact that we actually make appointments for the clients. In other counties volunteers are assigned to sites where they sit and clients are taken on a first come first serve basis. Our process is efficient and saves needless waiting time for both the client and the volunteer. In addition, our volunteers are assigned to the same clients each year which helps the elderly clients feel more comfortable divulging their personal information to volunteers that have become like friends to many of them!

Each year our volunteers process well over 2900 returns. In 2015 the volunteers were able to get back over \$1,666,391 in refunds for the clients. That money was put back into the economy of Somerset County! These volunteers also help residents with their Property Tax Rebate forms. Our program is completely volunteer driven. There are 6 lead volunteers who are trained each year by the IRS and they in turn take on the responsibility to train the other volunteers. These lead volunteers take on the responsibility of all aspects of the training including mentoring the new volunteers. Additionally, our volunteers do well over 100 homebound visits for clients who cannot get out of their homes. They also go to many of the Senior Living facilities and Lyons Hospital for the Veterans.

If you would like to have our volunteers assist you this tax season, please call (908)541-5710 to get an appointment. Anyone is eligible for this free service as long as your taxes are simple (no business expenses, foreign money or complicated schedules)—make the call today—our volunteers are here to serve you!



Caregiver Support Services

Somerset County Office on Aging and Disability Services' mission is to allow older adults to safely remain in the community for as long as possible. For an individual age 60 or more this often means that a family member becomes the informal caregiver. The family caregiver begins providing informal support by making sure the bills are paid, doctor visits are kept, and prescriptions are refilled. It often becomes necessary for this caregiver to provide personal care which includes bathing, dressing, toileting, and feeding. Performing all of these tasks often leads to the caregiver feeling stressed or overwhelmed and not knowing where to turn for help. One way we meet this mission is by offering a service called Caregiver Case Management. Within the Office on Aging and Disability Services we have two staff members who provide this service by assessing the situation, developing a care plan and collaborating with caregivers to address the physical, cognitive, social, cultural and emotional needs of the client and caregiver; and adjusts the plan as necessary to meet changes in the status of the client or caregiver. Monthly contact is made with the family to ensure that the needs are being met and to make necessary changes in the care plan. The staff members performing this function are Amy Kaelin, MSW, Eldercare Educator and Lisa Troulis, MSW, LSW Case Manager. For additional information, please contact the Office on Aging and Disability Services at 908-704- 6346 or toll free 1-888-747-1122.

Help Us Celebrate Somerset County Centenarians

Each May, the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders participates in the nationwide celebration of Older Americans Month. Established in 1963, Older Americans Month recognizes the contributions of individuals age 60 and above who enrich and strengthen our nation's communities. This year, the Somerset County Office on Aging and Disability Services, in collaboration with Regency Jewish Heritage Post-Acute Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, will hold a special celebration to honor centenarians who turn 100 or more in 2016. If you know a Somerset County Centenarian, please complete a recognition form, available on the county website. Completed forms may be faxed to 908-595-0194 or mailed to the attention of Cynthia D. Voorhees, Somerset County Office on Aging and Disability Services, P.O. Box 3000, Somerville, NJ 08876. **The deadline is Friday, April 15, 2016.** For more information, contact Cynthia D. Voorhees, Administrator, Eldercare Services at 908-704-6349 or voorhees@co.somerset.nj.us.

Nominations Sought For Annual Profiles of Positive Aging Recognition

The Somerset County Office on Aging and Disability Services is seeking nominations for "Profiles of Positive Aging" to recognize people age 60 and above who bring inspiration and continuity to the fabric of our communities by being an example of living longer, healthier and engaged lives. This acknowledgement is one of several events supported by the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders during Older American's Month, May 2016. The theme for the 51st anniversary of the Older American's Act (OAA) is "Blaze a Trail" acknowledging the perennial contributions of older adults in our nation. The focus is on how older adults are taking charge of their health, getting engaged in their communities, and making a positive impact in the lives of others. To be selected for the "Profiles of Positive Aging" recognition, a nominee must:

- Be a resident of Somerset County who is at least 60 years old who has not been recognized in the past
- Make contributions and set examples for others on ways to take charge of their health: is involved in community projects by serving as a volunteer, mentor, leader, speaker, committee member, entertainer, author, etc.

Examples include leading self-help, health promotion activities; serving on community committees that are health/safety-focused, leading/assisting with consumer-protection related projects, etc.

If you know of any senior who is a good role model for healthy, positive aging please complete a nomination form available on the county website. Completed forms may be faxed to (908) 595-0194 or mailed to the attention of Cynthia D. Voorhees, Somerset County Office on Aging and Disability Services, P.O. Box 3000, Somerville, NJ 08876. **The deadline is Friday, April 1, 2016.** For more information, contact Cynthia D. Voorhees, Administrator, Eldercare Services at 908-704-6349 or voorhees@co.somerset.nj.us.

Thoughts on Compassion from the PESS Director

William Semon, MA, LPC

"Compassion is the wish to see others free from suffering." His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

Every day we interact with clients that are suffering. These clients come to human services because they have reached a point where, they themselves or someone who cares about them have identified that they are suffering and need help. When you answer the phone or approach a person face to face they see you as a person that can help. How you interact with these individuals can either give these individuals hope or continue to reinforce their suffering.

I know that this concept is intense and could be viewed as putting added pressure on you as a screener. That is not the purpose of this bulletin at all. The purpose is to support you in order to help support those individuals we come in contact with.

The current focus of mental health is Recovery, a key component viewed as a prerequisite to recovery is hope. Hope is viewed as a trigger in the recovery process and one of recovery's maintaining factors (Spandler, 2011). The question that you now face is how does one instill hope? Hope is not tangible and it is not something we can just prescribe to a client. Hope is nurtured by compassion.

Compassion is a universal concept, but it is difficult to define. Webster's dictionary defines compassion as; sympathetic consciousness of others' distress, together with a desire to alleviate it. The definition alone could sum up the duties of a screener. The concept of compassion is universal but it is recognized that the current state of society has reduced the opportunities to engage in compassionate interactions.

Compassion is not a new concept; in fact it was the focus of one of the earliest mental health treatment facilities, dating back to 1792 with the start of the Quaker inspired York Retreat. This was a center developed to provide a safe compassionate place for individuals experiencing mental distress, in a time that most individuals would be sent to asylum and kept in deplorable conditions. The concept continued when John Perceval formed the Alleged Lunatic's Friends Society (ALFS) in 1846. Perceval formed the ALFS after he had gone through and survived the awful conditions of an asylum that he was admitted to for treatment of psychosis. His call for compassion in treatment for mental health is still the inspiration for the modern Recovery model (Spandler, 2011).

What it means to be human can be summed up by compassion. The qualities of compassion include but are not limited to; the motivation to be caring, sensitive, being empathetic and able to tolerate distress. It is with these qualities that you as a service provider will be able to facilitate a sense of purpose, meaning and hope in your clients. The evidence for this has been shown in the neurological responses to kindness and compassion in recovery and healing processes (Spandler, 2011).

It is easy to write about how you as a service provider should be compassionate, but this does not look at the complexity of what you as a service provider experience and what the client experiences. The way that health services are managed and designed, often is very formal and sterile in approach. This has been known as the "compassion deficit." Individuals that work in the field have expressed frustrations in not being able to provide the level of compassionate care that they feel their clients deserve. They identify that this often leads to unhelpful and possibly harmful interventions. Clients receiving these services will often consider themselves as survivors of their mental health difficulties and the services they receive (Spandler, 2011).

The compassionate deficit can and does lead to Compassion Fatigue (CF) within the service provider. CF is viewed as the reduced capacity or interest in being empathetic; which will manifest itself with tension and preoccupation by intrusive imagery, numbing, avoidance, anxiety, hyper vigilance, re-experiencing irritability, or outbursts of anger. This can further lead to misjudgment, clinical errors, poor treatment planning, and unproductive or negative interactions with the client and their supports (Rossi, 2012).

CF has led to certain clients, receiving mental services, as being treated unequally to others. This is evident when many providers work with clients that engage in self harm. Service providers have actually compounded the clients' distress by being ignored, criticized, or their wounds being the object of "professional voyeurism," often times in Emergency Departments. It is important to understand that self-harm does not just mean someone is cutting themselves. It is very possibly that you yourself engage in self-harming behaviors by overworking, drinking, or over exercising, in response to stress (Spandler, 2011).

As providers we are not doomed to only experiencing CF, in fact on the other end of the spectrum, a provider can experience Compassion Satisfaction (CS). CS is the satisfaction that you have been able to help your client (Rossi, 2012). CS allows the provider to develop an understanding and appreciating a person's unique way of being in the world, known as "being with" (Spandler, 2011).

Compassion will be the foundation for all interventions, policies, procedures, and interactions in PESS. It is important for you, as a provider, to offer the level of compassion you would like to receive if you or a loved one was coming on to the unit. The experience of coming onto our unit to be screened is traumatizing in itself. If you approach the client with compassion, it will make the clients experiencing more positive and hopefully make your interactions with them more productive. The simplest way that you can make sure you are starting your initial interaction with a client in a compassionate way is to simply ask, "How can I help you today?"

Opioid Overdose Prevention Project

In February, Gayle Kaufman and Raquel Aiello from Juvenile Institutional Services and Tara James and Mike Mistretta from the One Stop Career Training Services Center received their certification in the administration of Naloxone, better known by its brand name, Narcan. Naloxone is a prescription opiate antidote that blocks the effects of opioids and reverses an overdose. Opioids include heroin and prescription pain pills like morphine, codeine, oxycodone, methadone and Vicodin.



Because the nature of their work puts them in direct contact with at-risk youth and young adults in the field, all four were chosen to participate in this training, which was offered by Somerset Treatment Services and sponsored through the Opioid Overdose Prevention Project. After being certified, each received a kit that contains a bottle of Naloxone, which is administered as a nasal spray. While Naloxone is harmless to anyone not in an active overdose, when administered to an individual in an opioid crisis, it provides precious time for an emergency responder to arrive and provide further medical intervention. Having the ability to administer Naloxone is just another tool that our staff can access from their toolbox. Our staff now has peace of mind knowing they have the ability to make a significant positive impact in this type of a crisis situation, if it should ever arise.

Drug Trends: Weeding out the Hype

According to researchers at Yale University, about 27% of high school students who have used both marijuana and e-cigarettes reported using the devices to vaporize cannabis. Those most likely to vaporize pot with e-cigarettes included males and younger students. The likely reason for using e-cigarettes to smoke marijuana is there is no smell and thus, use is hidden.

Parents and professionals need to understand creative use of e-cigarettes is only one of the new trends related to drugs facing our youth. On February 26, 2016, a workshop titled, Drug Trends: Weeding out the Hype was presented at 27 Warren Street, Somerville, NJ. Sponsored in by Friends of Somerset County Youth, Empower Somerset, Safe Coalition of Hunterdon and Somerset County and the Somerset County Youth Services Commission, it featured Michael Litterer, CHES, CPS who discussed the latest drug trends. Attendees also learned about the damaging effects these drugs have, methods for identification and how our culture is driving their popularity.



VA Health Benefits and Eligibility Camp Lejeune: Past Water Contamination

You may be eligible for VA health benefits if you served on active duty (Veterans) or resided (family members) at Camp Lejeune for 30 days or more between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987.

Veterans who are eligible will be able to receive VA health care. In addition, care for qualifying health conditions is provided at no cost to the Veteran, including copayments.

Eligible family members receive reimbursement for out-of-pocket medical expenses incurred from the treatment of qualifying health conditions after all other health insurance is applied.

Conditions: Esophageal cancer, Breast cancer, Kidney cancer, Multiple myeloma, Renal toxicity, Female infertility, Scleroderma, Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Lung cancer, Bladder cancer, Leukemia, Myelodysplastic syndromes, Hepatic steatosis, Miscarriage, and Neurobehavioral effects.

A Camp Lejeune Veteran does not need to have one of the 15 health conditions to be eligible to receive VA health care, nor do they need a service connected disability to be eligible as a Camp Lejeune Veteran for VA Health care.

For more information call Somerset County Veterans Services 908-704-6329.



Community Partner Highlight: Freedom Trail Self Help Center

Freedom Trail began in 1988 and provides a place for present and former consumers of mental health services to meet, socialize, and engage in recreational and self help activities. While they have historically been known as a drop in center, they offer much more to the community. Members have access to a computer skills classes, life skills and recreational groups, and organized activities and events. In addition to hosting recreational trips, Freedom Trail hosts specialized trips such as dentist visits, to ensure that members are able to take care of not only their mental wellbeing, but their physical wellbeing. They believe in a whole health model and want to continue to be seen as a community wellness center. Two times a year the staff participates in wellness conferences. In addition, Freedom Trail serves as an advocate for individuals who suffer from mental illness. They seek to empower their members to participate in their own care. They provide their members with access to legislative decision makers so that members can be a part of the policy process that affects them. The center has a strong relationship with the Human Services Department, specifically the Community Development Office and Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center. Freedom Trail is open 6 days a week: M,W,F:10am-3pm; T,Th:4pm-9pm;Sat:4pm-9pm. For more information call 908-722-5778.

Committee Corner: Human Services Advisory Council

The Somerset County Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) is an entity regulated by the State Department of Human Services and State Department of Children and Families. Its mission is to provide County-based human services planning, advocacy and advisory. Council members include County government employees, community non-profit agencies, private non-profit agencies, advocates, and consumers or their family members. Over the past year, the HSAC has invigorated its membership; however, representation from the community is still needed on the council. The HSAC is especially interested in having consumers of services or their family members join the council. It is important to have input from those utilizing community resources, as the council strives to create effective strategies and recommendations to better meet previously unmet human service needs.

This year, the HSAC identified a theme to plan, educate the community of services available, and provide advocacy for support services to assist individuals in reaching a living wage. A planning process to identify the previously unmet needs of eight priority populations is underway. These populations consist of children, youth and families, developmentally disabled, mental health, substance use disorders, homeless, low-income, physically disabled, and aging. Planning subcommittees consisting of consumers and providers have been organized to provide input. In addition, a consumer survey will be sent to citizens throughout the County and consumer/provider focus groups will be held to provide data to support the identified unmet needs of each priority population. The HSAC is very interested in acquiring input from those who use human services and creating task forces to acquire funding, to provide advocacy, and inform residents and providers of the services available in our Somerset County communities.

The 2016 to 2020 Human Services Priority Population Plan will be implemented over the next year after approval by the Board of Chosen Freeholders. If any consumers or family members of consumers are interested in participating in a focus group or taking the survey, please contact Sarah Murchison at 908-704-6307 or murchis@co.somerset.nj.us.

Job Opportunities in County Human Services

Crisis Counselor I Position responsible for screening clients for psychiatric hospitalization both voluntary and involuntary. Position responsible for answering the crisis hotline and performs mobile outreach in the community; County Jail; nursing facilities and other agencies; provides coverage on weekends and holidays. Position responsible for completing all paperwork for each client screened. Position participates in all team meetings.

Case Manager Provides supervision of and intensive case management for youth who are court ordered to participate in the Home Detention and Advanced House Arrest programs in Somerset and Hunterdon Counties. Oversees all aspects of all electronic monitoring technology. Provides on-call coverage for caseload 24 hours a day, Monday through Friday. Provides case management for youth and young adults transitioning back into the community from secure confinement. In addition, may assist with providing services to youth who participate in other programs administered by Juvenile Institutional Services as needed.

Peer C.A.R.E. Associate Primary function of this position is to coordinate and implement all facets of an individual's co-occurring services in a person-centered, wellness and recovery and trauma informed environment by using his/her lived experience as a tool to empower, support and inspire hope. These individual based services including individual, group and pre-co-occurring facilitation, equaling a level of 66% of weekly hours (24.75 hours of the 37.5 hour work week). All contact will be documented within the parameters of regulatory standards.

Psychiatrist I Position provides psychiatric assessment and treatment to clients; serves as consultant to other staff. Position participates in Performance Improvement, peer review and medical staff activities. Position assesses individuals who present with psychiatric disorders in any clinical setting, records medical history and prescribes in accordance with client needs, and under overall supervision of Medical Director.

P/T Case Manager Position responsible for engaging the homeless; mentally ill client toward acceptance of mental health and other critical services and to assist in housing stabilization in the community. Responsible for writing and maintaining the treatment plans, monitoring the client's progress, communicating with numerous in-house and outside providers as the client is linked to services. Provides assessment, treatment planning and crisis management and coordinates all aspects of treatment. As the coordinator of the client's treatment the clinician utilizes a holistic treatment approach in helping the client stabilize their psychiatric symptoms and permanently integrate into the community. Position maintains awareness of the practical and clinical status of each client so that individual's needs are addressed. Actively engage clients through outreach strategies with attention to rapport, boundaries and safety.

P/T Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Position provides psychiatric assessment and treatment to clients; serves as consultant to other staff. Position participates in Performance Improvement (PI), peer review and medical staff activities. Assesses individuals who present with psychiatric disorder in any clinical setting, records medical history and prescribes in accordance with client needs, and under overall supervision of Medical Director. Any and all staff may be asked to provide clinical coverage as needed and as appropriate based on the needs of the organization.

P/T Crisis Counselor Position provides psychiatric counseling for a 24 Hour hotline and a walk-in center. Counseling may include but not limited to, crisis intervention, assessment, referral, training, technical assistance, monitoring clients, etc. Position will perform mobile outreach with local police. Position will also provide suicide hotline coverage.

P/T Substance Abuse Counselor Provides counseling and case management as appropriate to primarily Somerset County Jail inmates to help them clarify and resolve problems associated with co-occurring alcohol or other drug abuse/dependence and a diagnosable psychiatric condition. Documents clinical activity per policy. Contributes to agency performance improvement efforts to assure ethical and effective treatment in accordance with state regulations and accrediting body standards. Adheres to jail protocols and coordinates with other jail based agency personnel and jail staff, as appropriate, in providing services.

For qualification requirements, compensation information, and job responsibilities please visit the Somerset County website.

What's Coming Up

February 1st–April 15th: *Volunteer Services* hosts the Income Tax Program.

March 4th: *Youth Services* will host a workshop on the Anger Management

March 15th: Municipal Alliance Training Got Data...Now What?

April 9th: Science-sational Day for children grades 1-5. Register at 4HisTOPS.org

April 9th: "Retro FRESH," for teens in 7th to 12th grades. It will take place on Saturday, April 9, 2016 at the Ted Blum 4-H Center, 310 Milltown Road in Bridgewater. Retro FRESH is a party, planned by youth and adults, with time to get straight about drugs and alcohol. Everyone will participate in yoga, a performance by Conrad the Magician, team building skills, Minute-To-Win-It games, and a healthy activity. In addition, there will be DJ CJ, basketball, Marshmallow Tower, friendship bracelet making and board games. For more information contact us at 908-704-6307 or murchis@co.somerset.nj.us

Our Staff

Help us in welcoming the following new additions to the Human Services Team

Eileen Allen– Nurse Care Coordinator

Adam Blank -Marketing and Communications Program Coordinator

Meagan Brixie– Integrated Case Manager

Matthew Bruno– Peer Wellness Coach

Heather Hahn - IDRC Administrator

Jackie Puzio– Veterans Services Administrative Assistant

William Semon– PESS Director

Jennifer Sorensen– Municipal Alliance Coordinator

Annette Smutko - 4-H Youth Development Administrative Assistant

Ashley White - Agriculture and Resource Management Administrative Assistant

Human Services Public Meetings

March 3– 5pm: Mental Health Board

March 7- 9:30am: Professional Advisory Committee

March 8– 6:30pm: Freeholder Meeting

March 9– 9:30am: Local Advisory Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse /County Alliance Steering Subcommittee

March 16– 1:30pm: Aging Advisory Council

March 22– 12pm: Youth Services Commission

March 22– 1:30pm: Children's Inter-Agency Coordinating Council

March 22– 6:30pm: Freeholder Meeting

March 23– 1:30pm: Human Services Advisory Council

April 4- 9:30am: Professional Advisory Committee

April 7- 5pm: Mental Health Board

April 12– 6:30pm: Freeholder Meeting

April 13– 9:30am: Local Advisory Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse /County Alliance Steering Subcommittee

For more information regarding these meetings or how to get involved with a committee email Julie at desimone@co.somerset.nj.us or call 908-704-6335.